

MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT



Office of Public Information

contact: Marcia McBrien | (313) 972-3219 or (517) 373-0129

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CORRIGAN REELECTED CHIEF JUSTICE OF THE MICHIGAN SUPREME COURT

LANSING, MI, January 9, 2003 – Maura D. Corrigan will serve a second two-year term as Chief Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court, following an election held by the Justices today.

Corrigan said she appreciated “having the continued confidence of my colleagues. Being Chief Justice, as I have said before, is both a supreme honor and a supreme burden. I could not carry out this role without my colleagues’ support.”

Corrigan, the Supreme Court’s 62nd Chief Justice, noted that many challenges lie ahead for the state’s judiciary. “We have accomplished a great deal in recent years to improve court services for Michigan citizens, but we still have much to do,” she said.

In December 2002, the Michigan Legislature passed legislation permitting streamlining of trial courts on a “local option” basis. Although the Supreme Court took no position on the bills, the Court has long supported the concept of streamlined courts, Corrigan said. “I believe that this development holds great promise for our state judicial branch and for the people of Michigan,” Corrigan said. “Now Michigan citizens have the option of streamlined courts.”

Court reform legislation charges the Supreme Court with reviewing court consolidation plans, Corrigan added. The Supreme Court and the State Court Administrative Office, the Court’s administrative arm, “will be ready to help any county that is interested in trial court reform,” Corrigan said.

A continuing challenge for the Court is implementing the federally-mandated Child Support Enforcement System (CSES), a computer module that permits tracking of child support payments on a national basis, Corrigan noted. The State of Michigan faces over \$142 million in federal penalties if all Michigan counties do not convert by the October 1, 2003 deadline. If Michigan’s CSES is certified by federal authorities, the state could recoup \$36 million in federal sanctions that the state has already paid, in addition to avoiding future penalties. While CSES is managed by the state’s Department of Information Technology, Corrigan has said the system’s success “is a top priority of this Court.”

“We have already come a long way toward federal certification of Michigan’s CSES system, and the vast majority of Michigan counties have already committed to this effort, but we need all counties on board,” Corrigan said. “If we are successful, not only will the state avoid huge penalties, but we will have improved tracking of child support and a better way to find parents who try to evade their support obligations.”

Corrigan was elected to the Michigan Supreme Court in November 1998 for an eight-year term and was first elected Chief Justice in January 2001. Her second term as Chief Justice will run through 2004.

Corrigan graduated magna cum laude from Marygrove College with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1969, and cum laude from the University of Detroit Law School with a Juris Doctor in 1973. She served as a law clerk to the Honorable John Gillis of the Michigan Court of Appeals, worked as an assistant prosecuting attorney in Wayne County from 1974 to 1979, and was appointed Chief of Appeals in the U. S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Michigan. In 1986, she was promoted to Chief Assistant United States Attorney, the first woman to hold that position. In 1989, Corrigan became a partner in the law firm of Plunkett & Cooney, where she specialized in litigation and appeals. In March of 1992, she was appointed to the Michigan Court of Appeals by Governor John Engler. Corrigan was elected to a partial term on the Court of Appeals and then reelected in 1994 to a full six-year term. After receiving the nomination of her colleagues, the Supreme Court appointed Corrigan as Chief Judge of the 28-judge appeals court and its 250 employees in 1997. She served two years as Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals before being elected to the Michigan Supreme Court.

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